

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended): A barrier for retarding fire comprising:

water-permeable fabric for covering a substantial area;

said fabric having a surface and having at least 9 pockets per square foot, each pocket having a volumetric capacity of between about 0.03 cubic inches and about 17 cubic inches, wherein substantially all of said pockets contain hydrated superabsorbent polymer in the amount of between about 0.01 and about 2 grams unhydrated weight of superabsorbent polymer per cubic inch of volumetric capacity of said pockets; and a layer of steam at said surface of said fabric.

Claim 2 (original): A barrier according to claim 1, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is a polyacrylate or a polyacrylate derivative.

Claim 3 (original): A barrier according to claim 1, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is polyacrylamide.

Claim 4 (currently amended): A barrier according to claim 1, wherein each one of said pockets when the superabsorbent polymer is unhydrated is between about ½ inch and about 5 inches long and between about ½ inch and about 5 inches wide.

Claim 5 (currently amended): A barrier according to claim 1, where each of said pockets holds between about 0.005 grams and about 3 grams unhydrated weight of said superabsorbent polymer.

Claim 6 (original): A barrier according to claim 1, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is loose within said pockets when said superabsorbent polymer is unhydrated.

Claim 7 (original): A barrier according to claim 1, further comprising two sheets joined together to form said pockets between said sheets, wherein at least one of said sheets is water-permeable.

Claim 8 (original): A barrier according to claim 1, wherein said sheets are joined together with at least one joining element.

Claim 9 (original): A barrier according to claim 1, wherein said sheets are joined together with stitching.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A fire-retardant barrier according to claim 1, further comprising:

water-permeable fabric for covering a substantial area;

said fabric having at least 9 pockets per square foot, each pocket having a volumetric capacity of between about 0.03 cubic inches and about 17 cubic inches, wherein substantially all of said pockets contain between about 0.01 and about 2 grams of superabsorbent polymer per cubic inch of volumetric capacity of said pockets; and  
means for fastening said barrier to a second fire-retardant barrier.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A fire-retardant barrier according to claim 1, further comprising:

water-permeable fabric for covering a substantial area;

said fabric having at least 9 pockets per square foot, each pocket having a volumetric capacity of between about 0.03 cubic inches and about 17 cubic inches, wherein substantially all of said pockets contain between about 0.01 and about 2 grams of superabsorbent polymer per cubic inch of volumetric capacity of said pockets; and  
fasteners for fastening said barrier to a second fire-retardant barrier.

Claim 12 (currently amended): A barrier ~~according to claim 1, further comprising:~~

water-permeable fabric for covering a substantial area; said fabric having at least 9 pockets per square foot, each pocket having a volumetric capacity of between about 0.03 cubic inches and about 17 cubic inches, wherein substantially all of said pockets contain

between about 0.01 and about 2 grams of superabsorbent polymer per cubic inch of volumetric capacity of said pockets; and  
means for fastening said barrier to a building.

Claim 13 (currently amended): A barrier ~~according to claim 1~~, further comprising:  
water-permeable fabric for covering a substantial area; said fabric having at least 9 pockets per square foot, each pocket having a volumetric capacity of between about 0.03 cubic inches and about 17 cubic inches, wherein substantially all of said pockets contain between about 0.01 and about 2 grams of superabsorbent polymer per cubic inch of volumetric capacity of said pockets, and  
fasteners for fastening said barrier to a building.

Claim 14 (original): A barrier for retarding fire, comprising:  
a plurality of pockets connected together to cover a substantial area;  
wherein each one of said plurality of pockets has a pair of fabric layers, wherein at least one of said fabric layers is water-permeable, and a cavity disposed between said fabric layers, said cavity having a capacity of between about 0.03 cubic inches and about 17 cubic inches;  
wherein substantially all of said plurality of pockets hold between about 0.01 and about 2 grams of a superabsorbent polymer per cubic inch of volumetric capacity.

Claim 15 (original): A method of retarding fire from burning an object, comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of fire-retardant barriers, each having water-permeable fabric, said fabric having at least 9 pockets per square foot, each pocket having a volumetric capacity of between about 0.03 cubic inches and about 17 cubic inches, wherein substantially all of said pockets contain between about 0.01 and about 2 grams of superabsorbent polymer per cubic inch of volumetric capacity of said pockets;

covering substantially all of said object with said plurality of fire-retardant barriers;  
and

hydrating said superabsorbent polymer in each one of said plurality of fire-retardant barriers.

Claim 16 (original): A method according to claim 15, further comprising the step of fastening said plurality of fire-retardant barriers together for covering substantially all of said building.

Claim 17 (original): A method according to claim 15, further comprising the step of evaporating or boiling a portion of the water that was absorbed by the superabsorbent polymer to form a steam layer at a surface of the barriers for protecting said barriers from a fire.

Claim 18 (original): A method according to claim 15, further comprising the step of quenching fire with said steam layer.

Claim 19 (new): A barrier according to claim 10, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is a polyacrylate or a polyacrylate derivative.

Claim 20 (new): A barrier according to claim 10, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is polyacrylamide.

Claim 21 (new): A barrier according to claim 10, wherein each one of said pockets is between about ½ inch and about 5 inches long and between about ½ inch and about 5 inches wide.

Claim 22 (new): A barrier according to claim 10, where each of said pockets holds between about 0.005 grams and about 3 grams of said superabsorbent polymer.

Claim 23 (new): A barrier according to claim 10, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is loose within said pockets when said superabsorbent polymer is unhydrated.

Claim 24 (new): A barrier according to claim 10, further comprising two sheets joined together to form said pockets between said sheets, wherein at least one of said sheets is water-permeable.

Claim 25 (new): A barrier according to claim 11, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is a polyacrylate or a polyacrylate derivative.

Claim 26 (new): A barrier according to claim 11, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is polyacrylamide.

Claim 27 (new): A barrier according to claim 11, wherein each one of said pockets is between about ½ inch and about 5 inches long and between about ½ inch and about 5 inches wide.

Claim 28 (new): A barrier according to claim 11, where each of said pockets holds between about 0.005 grams and about 3 grams of said superabsorbent polymer.

Claim 29 (new): A barrier according to claim 11, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is loose within said pockets when said superabsorbent polymer is unhydrated.

Claim 30 (new): A barrier according to claim 11, further comprising two sheets joined together to form said pockets between said sheets, wherein at least one of said sheets is water-permeable.

Claim 31 (new): A barrier according to claim 12, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is a polyacrylate or a polyacrylate derivative.

Claim 32 (new): A barrier according to claim 12, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is polyacrylamide.

Claim 33 (new): A barrier according to claim 12, wherein each one of said pockets is between about ½ inch and about 5 inches long and between about ½ inch and about 5 inches wide.

Claim 34 (new): A barrier according to claim 12, where each of said pockets holds between about 0.005 grams and about 3 grams of said superabsorbent polymer.

Claim 35 (new): A barrier according to claim 12, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is loose within said pockets when said superabsorbent polymer is unhydrated.

Claim 36 (new): A barrier according to claim 12, further comprising two sheets joined together to form said pockets between said sheets, wherein at least one of said sheets is water-permeable.

Claim 37 (new): A barrier according to claim 13, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is a polyacrylate or a polyacrylate derivative.

Claim 38 (new): A barrier according to claim 13, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is polyacrylamide.

Claim 39 (new): A barrier according to claim 13, wherein each one of said pockets is between about ½ inch and about 5 inches long and between about ½ inch and about 5 inches wide.

Claim 40 (new): A barrier according to claim 13, where each of said pockets holds between about 0.005 grams and about 3 grams of said superabsorbent polymer.

Claim 41 (new): A barrier according to claim 13, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is loose within said pockets when said superabsorbent polymer is unhydrated.

Claim 42 (new): A barrier according to claim 13, further comprising two sheets joined together to form said pockets between said sheets, wherein at least one of said sheets is water-permeable.

Claim 43 (new): A barrier according to claim 14, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is a polyacrylate or a polyacrylate derivative.

Claim 44 (new): A barrier according to claim 14, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is polyacrylamide.

Claim 45 (new): A barrier according to claim 14, wherein each one of said pockets is between about ½ inch and about 5 inches long and between about ½ inch and about 5 inches wide.

Claim 46 (new): A barrier according to claim 14, where each of said pockets holds between about 0.005 grams and about 3 grams of said superabsorbent polymer.

Claim 47 (new): A barrier according to claim 14, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is loose within said pockets when said superabsorbent polymer is unhydrated.

Claim 48 (new): A barrier according to claim 14, further comprising two sheets joined together to form said pockets between said sheets, wherein at least one of said sheets is water-permeable.

Claim 49 (new): A method of isolating fuel from the flames of a fire, comprising the steps of:

providing at least one fire-retardant barrier between said fuel and said flames, said barrier having a surface exposed to said flames and having water-permeable fabric, said fabric having at least 9 pockets per square foot, each pocket having a volumetric capacity of between about 0.03 cubic inches and about 17 cubic inches, wherein substantially all of said pockets contain hydrated superabsorbent polymer in the amount of between about 0.01 and about 2 grams unhydrated weight of superabsorbent polymer per cubic inch of volumetric capacity of said pockets; and

allowing a steam layer to form at said exposed surface of said barrier.

Claim 50 (new): A method according to claim 49, further including the steps of allowing said steam layer to dissipate, and then removing said barrier.